

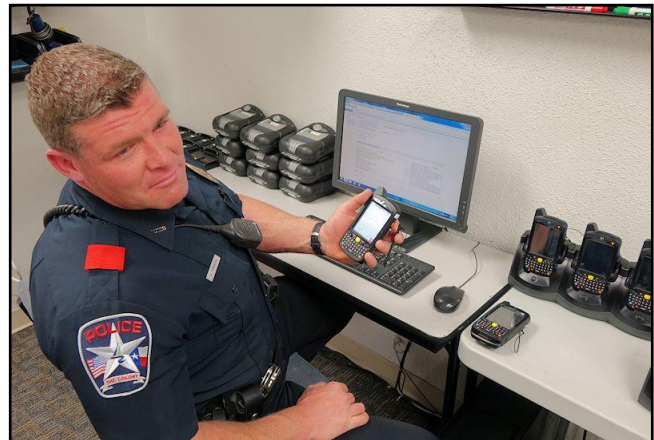
PD tech upgrade to improve efficiency, safety

THE COLONY, Texas — The Colony Police Department recently implemented a new technology that will facilitate quicker, safer traffic stops.

Gone are the days when officers write out tickets by hand. Now, officers on patrol will all be carrying new, state-of-the-art devices for recording and issuing traffic citations.

The devices are about the size of a standard smartphone, and come with a Blackberry-like keypad and stylus. They also feature a scanner that can read the bar codes on a driver's license and registration sticker, saving officers from having to manually input that information. The devices are connected to a portable printer via Bluetooth technology.

The devices are manufactured by Brazos Technology, a Texas company based in College Station. With funding provided through fine collections at The Colony Municipal Court, 14 devices and printers, as well as related software, were purchased at a cost of approximately \$57,000.



Sgt. Ed Hall said the Brazos devices will significantly reduce the amount of time required to conduct a traffic stop, thereby increasing safety for everyone involved.

“Plus, the old system was very outdated and caused a lot of problems on the back end,” Hall said. “This new device is the Cadillac of ticket-writers.”

The new system is also customized with data specific to The Colony. When inputting the location of an offense, a pull-down menu provides quick-touch access to all the city's streets. The same goes for the listing of possible offenses.

Lt. Brent Brown said the average traffic stop used to take between 10 and 15 minutes. Early testing has shown stops may now be conducted in 5 minutes or less with the Brazos technology.

A select group of supervisors recently learned how to use the devices and subsequently trained the rest of the department for immediate utilization. “They’re very user friendly,” Brown said.



In addition to facilitating faster inputting of data, the devices also come equipped with cameras and audio recording devices. Pictures and audio files from a traffic stop are bundled with the citation information, all of which is downloaded directly into the court’s computer system via a docking station at police headquarters.

“This eliminates a lot of paperwork back at the station, and helps the court staff tremendously,” added Brown.

The department’s old ticket-writers have been retired, and the Brazos devices are now in use by The Colony patrol and traffic officers 24 hours a day.

###